



MEDIA ADVISORY

MEDIA ADVISORY – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST

To: News Departments/Reporters

From: Loreeta Leer Frank, public information officer
Patience Hurley, public information coordinator
North Dakota Department of Health

Date: Feb. 21, 2003

Subject: Communication During Smallpox Vaccination Process

Phase I of North Dakota's Smallpox Response Plan will begin February 24 with the vaccination of volunteer public and private health care providers who will comprise the state's smallpox response teams. The process of vaccinating the volunteers is expected to take 30 to 45 days.

To maintain security – and to protect the privacy of the volunteers who are being vaccinated – state health officials will not disclose the dates or locations of the clinics or the names of the volunteers. However, the following information will be provided to the media:

- The Department of Health website will list the numbers of people who have received the vaccine in North Dakota and any adverse reactions to the vaccine. The numbers will be updated each Wednesday beginning March 5, 2003
- The Department of Health will use the following categories to indicate the types of adverse reactions:
 - **Potentially Life-Threatening Reactions**
Life-threatening reactions require hospitalization. These include eczema vaccinatum – a serious skin rash caused by widespread infection of the skin in people with skin conditions such as eczema or atopic dermatitis; progressive vaccinia, also called vaccinia necrosum – ongoing infection of the skin with tissue destruction; postvaccinial encephalitis – inflammation of the brain; Stevens-Johnson Syndrome – a widespread rash involving mucous membranes as well as the skin; and fetal vaccinia – a rare event involving infection of a fetus.
 - **Moderate to Severe Reactions**
Moderate to severe reactions commonly require health-care visits and follow-up and are expected to have good outcomes. These types of reactions generally resolve without treatment or with outpatient treatment. Typical examples include

vaccinia rash in multiple locations on the body, ocular vaccinia (infection of the eye), vaccinia blisters elsewhere on the body, and bacterial infection of the vaccination site.

– **Other Severe Reactions**

Other severe reactions are those that result in hospitalization, permanent disability, life-threatening illness, or death. These events are temporally-associated with smallpox vaccination but have not been documented to be causally-associated with vaccination.

Many mild reactions are expected responses to the vaccine and will go away without treatment. Common occurrences include soreness/redness at vaccine site, enlarged/sore glands in armpits, low grade fever, mild skin rash, missing work/school or recreational activities, difficulty sleeping. Mild reactions will not be reported by the Department of Health.

- If a volunteer in North Dakota experiences a life-threatening adverse reaction, the media will be notified. Information about the person – including name, age, gender and location – will not be released for confidentiality reasons; however, the following information will be released:
 - Medical condition of vaccinee
 - Type of reaction
 - Whether the vaccinee was previously vaccinated
 - Whether the vaccinee had any health conditions that may have contributed to the serious adverse reaction

If you have any questions concerning this memo or the upcoming vaccination process, please contact Loreeta Leer Frank or Patience Hurley, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2372.